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# MEMORIAL

TO THE COUNCIL OF

PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

OF UPPER CANADA,

FROM THE BOARD OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

OF THE

COUNTY OF WATERLOO.



PRINTED BY JAFFRAY BROS., "REPORTER OFFICE," GALT.

1881

MEMORIAL

OF THE

PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

FROM THE BOARD OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

TO THE

COUNTY OF WATERLOO



PRINTED BY J. H. BROWN, WATERLOO, ONT.

Berlin, Aug. 7th, 1865.

Dear Sir :

The Board of Public Instruction for the County of Waterloo, at their last meeting in June, adopted the within Memorial, and ordered its transmission to the Council of Public Instruction for Upper Canada.

The five Reading Books in use at this time in our Common Schools were compiled some thirty years ago for the Irish National Schools; cheap editions of these books have been issued from time to time by speculative printers, but the Works themselves have never undergone any revision.

A large majority of the resident Teachers of this County have expressed their desire to see these books superseded by works of a more modern character, and few will venture to deny that a change is highly desirable, that these Readers have done duty long enough in our Schools, and that it is time they were put out of use.

The Waterloo County Board have ordered the within Memorial to be printed in pamphlet form for distribution to the several Boards of Public Instruction in Upper Canada.

I have the honor to be,

Your obed<sup>t</sup>. Serv<sup>t</sup>.

HENRY F. J. JACKSON,

Chairman Board of Public Instruction,  
County of Waterloo.

To the Hon. S. B. Harrison, M.C.,

Chairman Council of Public Instruction for Upper Canada,  
Toronto.

October 1891

The Board of Directors of the  
American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions  
has the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst.

and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the  
proper authorities for their consideration. It is the policy of the Board  
to consider all applications for the purpose of extending the work of the  
Board in the most efficient manner possible.

The Board is also pleased to learn that you are  
interested in the work of the Board and are desirous of  
securing the services of a competent person to  
assist in the work of the Board. It is the policy of the Board  
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Very respectfully,  
JOSEPH T. JACKSON,  
Secretary.

For the Board of Directors,  
American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,  
Boston.



*To the Honorable S. B. Harrison, Q. C., Chairman, and to the  
other Members of the Council of Public Instruction for  
Upper Canada.*

*The Memorial of the County Board of Public Instruction for  
the County of Waterloo.*

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH,

That your Memorialists have from time to time received from many qualified and experienced Teachers, complaints of the many defects which exist in the Series of National School Books or Readers, now in use in our Common Schools, under the authority of the Council of Public Instruction for Upper Canada.

The Teachers aver, and in the opinion of this Board, not without reason, that although the present authorised series of Readers possess many excellencies, there is yet room and there exists an urgent necessity for great and important improvements in the compilation of these books in order to render them suitable to the requirements of our School system in its present stage of advancement.

These Readers may at the time of their first publication not unreasonably have been regarded as fully adequate to the purpose for which they were compiled, namely for the use of the Irish National Schools, and at the time our Canadian School system was in its infancy it may have been wise to adopt them in the absence of a series better adapted to Canada.

They have now been in use, however, for a very long period, and have not undergone any revision during the time they have been used in our Common Schools; of necessity, therefore, much of the information contained in them has ceased to be matter of fact; the historical data, geographical and political definitions are incomplete or have passed away, and the books are not only defective but absolutely inaccurate and untruthful, and calculated to deceive and mislead instead of instructing those for whose benefit they were designed.

Since the introduction of these books into our Common Schools, vast and important changes have taken place in the social and material condition of our common country. The large accession to our population, the rapid opening up of our territory, the extension and perfection of agricultural science, the wonderful discovery and development of our mineral wealth, the marvellous fruition of the earth in its rocky depths where the dark petroleum flows, yielding to both continents through the agency of

practical science, the unspeakable blessing of cheap light; the expansion of our marine and internal navigation, our political mutations, our great unmanifested destiny, all contribute to raise our estimate of the country of our birth or of our adoption, and have given to Canada the first place in our affections. In what respect then can these School books be fairly defined as the "National Series" when the name of Canada is scarcely mentioned in their pages, or only obtains a passing and contemptuous reference? Should not every leaf of these little volumes while conveying the seeds of elementary knowledge to the children of the land, stimulate their youthful patriotism and exalt their love of country?

Is it too much to expect at this period of our national wealth and social culture, that the intellect and acquirements of our advanced men shall be put in requisition to produce a series of books for our Common Schools that shall justly be styled national, and that our children shall no longer be compelled to take their mental food, as it were, at the second table of an elder relative?

Indeed these authorised text books appear to have been compiled for no other country than Ireland, since that island is generally mentioned as "this country," and its inhabitants are defined pronominally as "*We*." Canada is invariably treated as a foreign, a wild and uncultivated country; as being barren, covered with dreadful forests (some books have "frosts") and hideous marshes, at once offensive to the senses and injurious to the human constitution (vid IV Book, page 99). When comparisons between countries are drawn, it is frequently done at the expense and to the injury of Canada, as if particular care had been taken by the compilers to exhibit hostility to Canada and to Canadian institutions.

In Book III, page 38, Greenland, Kamschatka, Holland and Canada are represented as countries in which the mode of conveying travellers is by sledges drawn by dogs, and as a matter of curiosity it is mentioned, that even in Ireland we "sometimes meet with this practice." In Book IV, page 134, the pupil is informed that the principal productions of Canada are grain, timber and tobacco, and that among the animals are the beaver, otter and martin, &c. At page 241, the pupil is led to believe that America is a wild country which has no government, that it is inhabited by tribes of wild indians, that no taxes are paid there, and that people who do not desire to pay taxes should go to America. At page 248, assurance is given that in America land can be obtained for nothing, that the inhabitants are so few that any one may have as much land as he chooses to clear. At

page 133, the youthful reader is told that the number of States composing the American Republic is twenty-four; that its climate is like that of other temperate regions of the globe; the soil generally fertile, producing Indian corn and other kinds of grain, with fine pasture, but that the climate of Canada is excessively cold.

Not a word is said about the industry and intelligence of the people of Canada, the fertility of the soil, its agricultural wealth, its great water and railway communications, its manufactures, its excellent public and private institutions, nor indeed of anything which the reader can treasure in his young mind, and which shall foster the love of country and the pride of citizenship. Canada is to Canadian children with these text books placed in their hands, a *terra incognita*.

If the subject matter of these compilations is censurable, certainly the workmanship, the getting up of these Common School Readers is equally open to objection. The privilege of printing these books has been given to a number of publishers, and but little care has been exercised to render them uniform or accurate. Many serious errors and curious dissimilarities occur in the various editions; in punctuation and in syllabication they are at variance with each other, and in consequence they are uncertain and capricious guides. Of these defects many examples might be given, but a few will suffice:—

In Lovell's Sequel, page 75, conspicuous is divided into three syllables; in Campbell's into four. In Lovell, page 96, 'tal-ent'; in Campbell, 'ta-lent'. Misprints are constantly occurring, confusing the teacher and pupil. Take for instance:—

In Dagg's third Reader, page 169, "proportionately"; in Dredge's edition, "proportionably."

In Dagg's third Reader, page 170, "sigh"; in McPhails, "sign."

" " page 171, "they"; in Lovell's, "that."

" " page 173, "fight"; in McPhail's, "field."

" " page 182, "to heaps"; in Lovell's, "in heaps."

" " page 180, "Booshala"; in others, "Booshalah."

" " page 215, "praise," "naught," "seen"; in

others, "pulse," "naught," "been."

And at other places will be found 'Harry for Henry'; 'rough for tough'; 'them for her'; 'song for sound'; 'those for whose' and many other discrepancies.

In Dagg's edition of the Second Book, in the eleventh lesson—"The Stable"—the pupil is informed that the greatest "amusement" of the stable is the horse. In Dagg's edition of the Sequel the following sentences occur—"The dog *who* stood



(page 59) ; 'But at America' (page 88) ; 'To see the eldest—speaking of two [page 195] ; 'Works which excites—in the description of the Peak Caverns.'

In the fifth book there are 137 pages of History, 60 of which are devoted to the Jews, and the remaining 77 to the rest of mankind. The "History" instead of illustrating its subject with captivating and instructive narrations, couched in simple, terse, and appropriate language, is simply a massing together of long and unpronounceable names amounting literally to thousands ; and the subject matter which might by a touch of genius have been rendered to the last degree attractive to the youthful imagination, is made to appear dull, dry, uninteresting, frigid, and monotonous. Again, historical incidents of a repulsive character, or suggestive of improper sentiments, which might perhaps be properly perused by the maturer student, are prematurely brought down to the Common School Room, and in such case are a transgression upon the rules of decorum and modesty.

It is not necessary that the teacher should be called upon to explain such words as 'debauchery,' 'licentiousness,' 'concubine,' 'pregnancy,' &c. The narration that Nero murdered his wife Octavia that he might marry an infamous woman named Poppoea, whom he afterwards kicked to death when she was in a state of pregnancy, is only calculated to call up unchaste images and can serve no instructive purpose.

The Canadian Text books on Arithmetic, Geography and Canadian History, are national productions, and worthy guides in the hands of the Common School Teacher ; but the Irish Readers are for the reasons set forth, in the opinion of your Memorialists, [having fulfilled long since the purpose of their creation] fit only to be placed among things obsolete and of a past age.

All which is respectfully submitted.

(Signed) HENRY F. J. JACKSON,

CHAIRMAN,

Board of Public Instruction, County of Waterloo.

Dated at Berlin, in the County of Waterloo, }  
this 26th day of June, A.D., 1865. }

